



**Newsletter, #52
Winter 2018/19**

www.evergreenconservancy.org

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Learn About Coyotes in Indiana County on April 12th at Blue Spruce Lodge

Here come the coyotes!! Indiana County residents are seeing coyotes more frequently - some in the wild but also where we do not expect them in residential areas. "Coyotes in Pennsylvania" will be presented on Friday April 12th at Blue Spruce Lodge beginning at 7 pm. The program is sponsored by Evergreen Conservancy and Patrick Snickles will be the presenter. Mr. Snickles is a state game warden supervisor with the South West Region of the Pennsylvania Game Commission. This program is open to the public, free, and will be of interest to children.



Coyotes have been in Pennsylvania since the 1930s but began spreading to our area in 1960. A male coyote can weigh up to 55 pounds. They will view pets and domestic animals as prey. One Indiana County sheep farmer was concerned about his flock and brought in a donkey to protect against coyotes.

Yes you can hunt coyotes. In fact some outdoor groups sponsor "coyote hunts".

Coyotes have been in Pennsylvania since the late 1930s, mostly in the Northern Tier counties at first but subsequently spreading across the entire state, including all Pennsylvania cities. In 2010, a man shot a coyote on Mount Washington, a high profile part of Pittsburgh.

Plan to come to Blue Spruce Lodge on April 12 at 7 pm to learn about a critter you may see not far from your home.

Evergreen Award Gives Recognition to Those Who Improve Our Environment You Can Nominate Someone Now!

There are a lot of things being done in Indiana County to improve our environment – to make our county a better place to live. But everyday citizens are unaware that it is going on. Every year Evergreen Conservancy takes nominations for a business, volunteer, organization or employee who has demonstrated grass roots leadership in environmental activities.

We are looking to recognize a person or organization that is using innovative technology to prevent harm to our environment, has a direct positive impact on our environment, or participates in activities that result in preservation of historical, cultural, or natural resources.

So far most of the Evergreen Award winners have been volunteers, but we have honored one business. Those who receive the Evergreen Award will be recognized at the conservancy's annual meeting. Most invite friends and family to share in this event. A newspaper photographer will be there.

We are asking you to nominate a person, business, or organization by completing a nomination form that is available from our Website www.evergreenconservancy.org. If you do not have access to a computer you could be sent a nomination form by calling 724-349-4333. This nomination should be returned to Evergreen Conservancy, PO Box 783, Indiana, PA 15701 no later than April 27.

Board Members

Cindy Rogers - President • Malcolm Hermann - Vice president • Becky Snyder -Treasurer
Tara Binion - Secretary • Dan Boone • Bob Lankard • John Dudash • Mike Tyree
Paul Yacovone • David Janetski • Shannon Jackson

OUR MISSION:

To advance the preservation, protection and stewardship of Natural, Cultural and Historical Resources in and around Indiana County, PA

Trail Clean Up Scheduled for May 11th

Evergreen Conservancy's clean-up of the Hoodlebug Trail and adjoining 119S areas has been scheduled for Saturday, May 11 at 9 am, meeting at the Homer Center Baseball field.

To get to the meeting place (the Homer City Ball Field) take old 119 South through Homer City (Main Street) Go past the high school. Take first right and follow about ¼ mile to a stop sign. Turn right and cross the Hoodlebug Trail and follow the trail to the parking lot.

Those wishing to help should go to the parking lot with gloves. Garbage bags will be supplied. In past years we have been able to finish in two hours or less.

EcoTour Updates

The Indiana County GeoTrail continues to perform well even during the winter. It's never too late to get started on the GeoTrail; it's available year-round. All you need is a smartphone/GPS unit and our GeoTrail passport! The passport can be found on our website at evergreenconservancy.org under the EcoTour tab or at various locations throughout the county that are also listed on our [website](#).

If you are curious to find out more about the Indiana County EcoTour and the GeoTrail, check out our 3 EcoTour videos linked to our [website](#). We are also underway with a new project, so stay tuned for future developments!

Greetings Conservancy Community Members.

I am Jeff Himes, and I have been selected to serve as the Project Assistant of the Indiana County Conservation District and the Evergreen Conservancy. I will begin this AmeriCorps position March 8 and I appreciate this opportunity to introduce myself.

I am one of those fellows who lost their job due to industrial cut backs during the late 1980's. I was a coal miner at Greenwich Collieries South Mine near Cookport. Following my layoff, I took a job as a carpenter's helper in Ocean City, Maryland and it seems to me now that I've been working my way back home ever-since. I grew up along the Moss Creek in the northern part of Cambria County on the outskirts of the small town of Marstellar. While growing up Barnesboro was the closest big town and became larger in 2000 when Barnesboro and the adjoining town of Spangler consolidated to become the Borough of Northern Cambria.

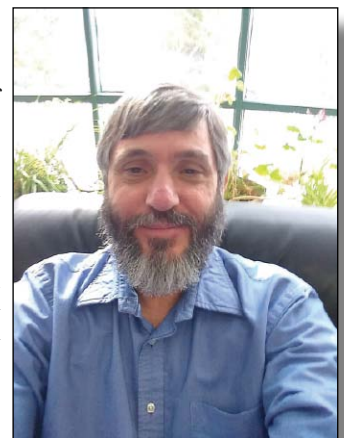
It was in Barnesboro that I first served as an AmeriCorps member. In 1997, after I graduated from Penn State University, and before I went onto graduate school, I became an AmeriCorps*VISTA member and worked with the Northern Cambria Community Development Corporation (NCCDC). I wanted to help build a stronger community and also needed practical experience before I applied to graduate schools, and VISTA was a perfect fit.

While at NCCDC, I was assigned to research Act 143 funding for family literacy. After 14 months of program development, building local partnerships, grant writing, site construction, and collecting other resources, we established the Family Learning Program. The program focused upon GED acquisition for parents and school readiness for their children. It went on to serve families in need of educational opportunities for over 10 years. I was hooked on community development work.

I then attended graduate school at West Virginia University, and I now hold degrees in Agricultural Business, Agricultural Science, and Sociology. After graduating WVU, I served as the Community Resource Development Director with Virginia Tech's Cooperative Extension Service in Carroll County and later as the 4-H Program Director with West Virginia University's Extension Service in Calhoun County. I then worked as a Community Development and Rural Leadership Educator with Penn State Cooperative Extension in Tioga County, where I helped create one of my favorite projects, the Tioga County Worm Farm.

The Worm Farm, a vermicomposting facility, served as a year-round educational venue for people interested in accelerated composting using earth worms. The vermiculture project was chiefly an exhibit during the Tioga County Fair in 2013 but also served as a prominent feature of the Penn State Master Gardener's demonstration garden.

I am now nearing the end of my career and am still wanting to work for my local community. I can't imagine more rewarding work than improving and preserving our environment. I can't wait to get started. I began my working career with an AmeriCorps position, now it is my hope to begin my volunteer career in the same manner.



Plants To Be On The Lookout For Dogbane

Why the name "Dogbane"? Is it the bane of dogs? Otherwise known as Apocynum, it is considered poisonous to dogs and cattle. The word "bane" is defined as deadly harm, ruin, deadly poison, and death justifying its common name. It is a plant with smooth opposite leaves, tough hairless stems and a milky sap. You will see Dogbane along roads, in fields, at Tanoma, and at all our county parks. There are two common varieties in Pennsylvania. Spreading or Pink Dogbane (*A. androsaemifolium*) is bushier, usually grows about three feet tall, and has upright whitish flowers with pink veining. Indian-hemp (*A. cannabinum*) grows up to 6 feet tall, and has up-right greenish white flowers. When Indian hemp and milkweed are in their early stage it is difficult to tell them apart but it becomes easier when they are older. Dogbane has spreading branches when older and long thin, curved, paired seed pods with tufts of white hairs. Dogbane is native to North America and was used by Prehistoric and Native Americans to make cordage, fishing



nets and lines, belts, bags, mats, sandals and garments. The fibers are very strong and resist weathering and decay and were thought to be better than flax and cotton. The milky sap in Dogbane was used as a diuretic, tonic and cathartic. In addition to other medicinal uses the roots were used as a heart stimulant, to induce vomiting, as a laxative, and to treat kidney problems. A glycoside in the seeds of the plant called cymarin make it dangerous for people to ingest. In the winter it is easy to spot because of the long dark brown paired pods. Dogbane is also nice to use in dried flower arrangements. You will see these Dogbane flower head and seeds hanging on the plant in winter.



by Cindy Rogers

Tanoma Update

BioMost came out one cold day in January and did some maintenance on the lifterator system on the Trompe. They shortened the pipes under the towers to prevent them from clogging and reinstalled them. And of the last check all six were working.

We are submitting a grant to get some funding to do some research to find out the output of the lifterators and the sleds for the production of Dissolved Oxygen. Greg Mount of IUP and his students will be doing the research in the spring/summer.

Environmental Education News

Single use plastic is a real problem for our earth and water. At the Family Fun Fest at the Indiana Mall on March 2nd, Evergreen will be highlighting facts about plastic and our environment. We will have a display of alternatives to plastic and what you can do to help.

We have a few programs scheduled for this spring and summer with Girl Scouts. If you or anyone you know is looking for environment related programs we will be happy to work with them to design a program either at our outdoor classroom at Tanoma or at their location. Just give us a call at 724-471-6020, or email us at evergreenconservancy@gmail.com.

Dates to Remember:

- March 2nd . . . All Day . . . Family Fun Fest 2019 – Come out and see us at the Indiana Mall. Or if you have a little time to donate send us an email that you are available to help out at the table for a couple of hours.
- March 14th . . . 7:00PM. . . . Evergreen Board Meeting, 1005 Oak Street – 2nd floor. All welcome. (Check the website in case there is any change in dates.
- April 12th . . . 7:00PM. . . . Spring program on Coyotes, Blue Spruce Lodge
- April 22nd . . . All Day. . . . Earth Day! Do something to help preserve our water or earth on this day!
- May 2nd . . . 6:30 & 7:30. . . PR and Finance meetings 1005 Oak Street – 2nd floor.
- May 11th . . . 9:00AM Hoodlebug trail clean up
- June 25th . . . 5:30PM. . . . EC Annual Meeting, Tanoma
- June 27th . . . 5:30PM. . . . Rain Date for Annual Meeting, Tanoma

Save the Date

Do you remember the last two Evergreen Conservancy's annual members meeting? They were greatly affected by floods of a generation. We're trying it again. Pray for dry weather. The annual meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday June 25 at the Tanoma Wetlands Environmental Education Center at 5:30 pm. But just in case we have set a back up date as Thursday June 27. More details will be given in a later newsletter.

It will be the perfect time to renew your membership!!!

Trees Remember Everything, part 2

In the last issue we briefly described how studying tree-rings can be used to gain insight into forest disturbances and some of the experiments that we are conducting in the Applied Plant Ecology Lab at IUP. The eastern hemlock is an ecologically important tree in the eastern U. S. and the Pennsylvania state tree. Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA) is an aphid-like insect that has been sweeping across Pennsylvania and the eastern U. S. over the last couple decades. This exotic pest feeds on the sugary sap produced by the tree and robs the tree of much needed energy. In our part of the county the tree usually succumbs in 7-10 years. One of our questions is whether we can use tree-ring analysis to pin point the time of infestation. Additionally, we wanted to know how sensitive this method is. Currently, we use a qualitative, visual assessment.

We sampled approximately 30 eastern hemlock trees in 2015 and 2016 in the western portion of the state. HWA was reported to have moved through this region between 2007-2010. Each tree had two cores removed at approximately 1.5 feet from the ground level. This is a non-destructive method that has been shown to not harm the tree. Each tree was visually assessed using methods outlined by the DCNR and we wanted to see how the tree-ring data compared to our visual assessment. When we looked at ring-widths of all trees combined (Figure 1; Top Panel) we found a lot of year to year growth variation within these forests. However, when we looked at the variation in growth per years (Std Dev), we found three disturbance events shown in red arrows (Figure 1; Right).

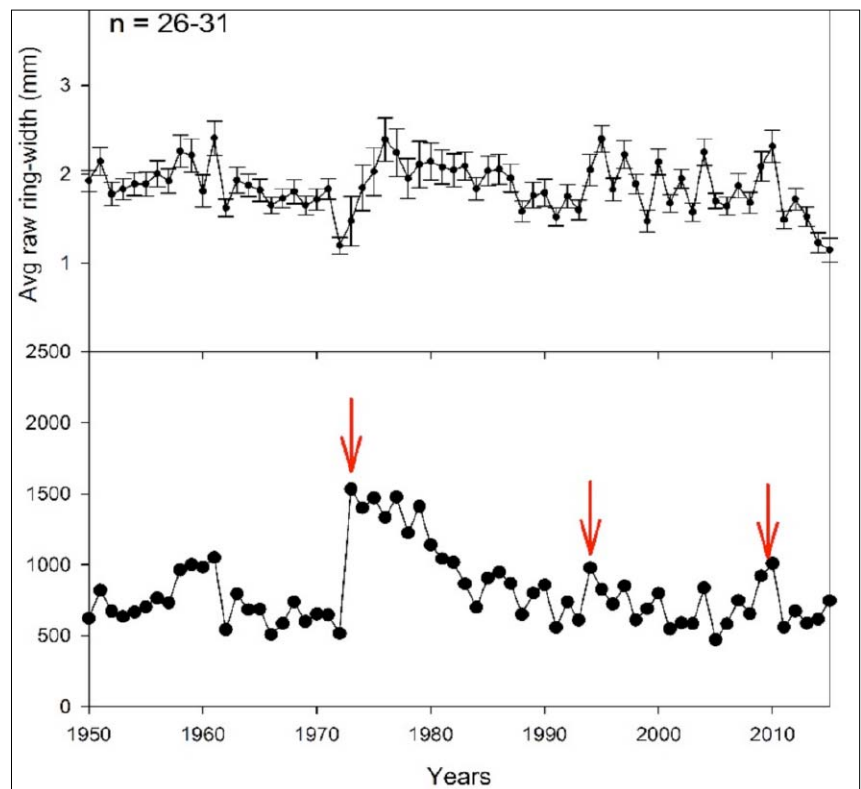


Figure 1. Raw ring-widths of all trees measured (Top) and standard deviation for each year (Bottom).

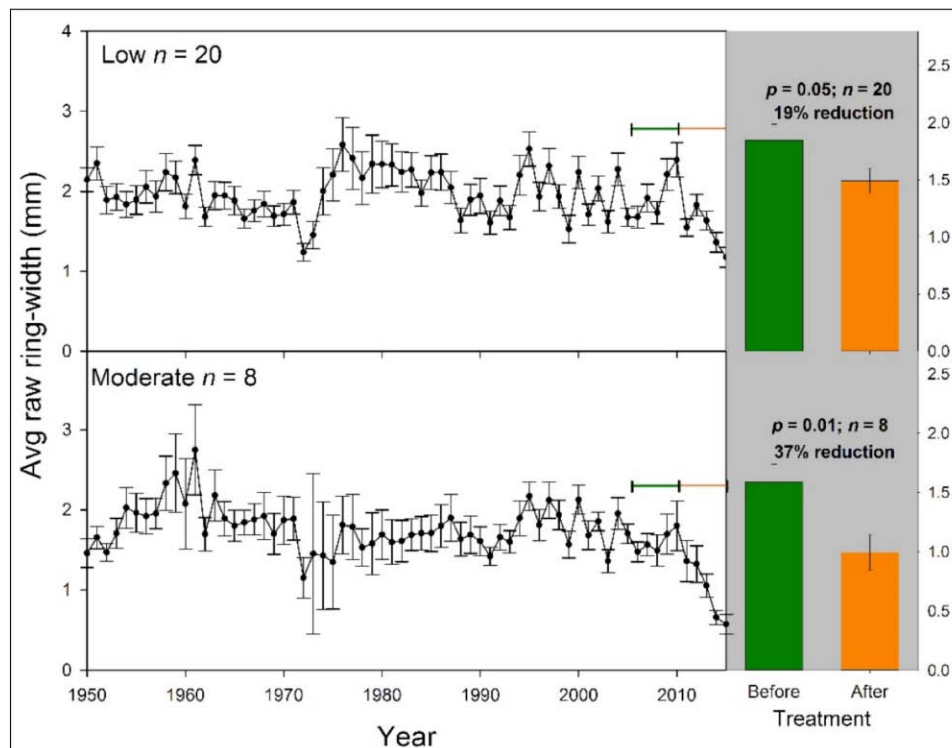


Figure 2. Average ring-width for low (Top Panel) and moderately (Bottom Panel) infested hemlock trees. Panels to the right show a comparison in ring-width five years before and after the 2010 disturbance event.

To interpret these data we are looking for spikes in the variation which tells us something is disturbing the stand causing the trees to behave (grow) erratically. The point that is most relevant to our question is the disturbance associated with 2010 growing season which is around the time HWA moved through this part of the state.

The next thing we did was plot trees that were considered low and moderately infested based on our visual assessment to see how sensitive our method is. We found an extremely strong signal in both low to moderately infested trees (Figure 2). When we compared growth five years prior to the 2010 disturbance and five years after we found a 19% and 37% reduction in our low to moderately impacted trees, respectively. These data suggest that we are able to use the tree-ring record to determine tree vigor and timing of disturbance with a high level of confidence. The next step is to use this method to help monitor the effectiveness of our HWA treatments. But, that is a topic for another issue.

Growing Greener May Lose from Governor's Proposed Budget

On February 5, Governor Tom Wolf presented his 2019-20 budget proposal that included initiatives he said would build the strongest workforce in the nation.

While the Wolf Administration proposes no broad-based tax increases, the Governor did propose a natural gas severance tax. This year, that severance tax is being introduced as legislation separate from the budget process. Last week, Wolf proposed a \$4.5 billion spending plan for infrastructure improvements that would rely on the proposed severance tax.

With regard to Growing Greener, the Governor's budget proposes to take significant amounts from the Environmental Stewardship (Growing Greener) Fund, the Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund and the Recycling Fund to support the administrative costs of DEP, DCNR, and county conservation districts.

According to the PA Environment Digest, "Funding for Growing Greener has decreased from an estimated average of \$200 million in the mid-2000s to \$57 million this year. This represents a 75 percent cut and an all-time low for the program."

Growing Greener has funded a multitude of environmental projects in Pennsylvania, among them the enormously successful Quick Response program run by WPCAMR. Quick Response provides Growing Greener funding in a streamlined way to repair projects for Growing Greener-eligible water quality projects. Since its inception in 2006, WPCAMR's Quick Response program has distributed over \$1.2 million to eligible groups including county conservation districts and watershed associations to repair water quality improvement projects throughout the state. Since 2006, the Quick Response program has also leveraged additional cash match and in-kind donations valued at well over \$195,000.

Quick Response is just one example of how Growing Greener funds are working hard to improve and protect our natural environment. Growing Greener continues to be vital to the improvement of Pennsylvania's water resources all over the state and must not lose funding.

Make your voice heard on the importance of funding Growing Greener by contacting your local state legislator. To find your local state legislator, go to: www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/findyourlegislator

Cindy Rogers

There is a proposal in our state budget to slash \$75.7 million in the coming year from the Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund and the Environmental Stewardship Fund (Growing Greener) in order to pay for government operations. Growing greener funds help with many abandoned mine reclamation projects that need to be done to reclaim or preserve our polluted waterways.

Pennsylvania's environmental funding needs are huge. Pressing water issues – from water quality investments needed for the Susquehanna and Chesapeake and Pennsylvania's other water basins to municipal stormwater management and flood reduction measures. Keystone and ESF were established to fund projects that make lasting improvements in communities. The proposed budget diversion would effectively take money away from communities as they work to address stormwater, flooding, water treatment, and other environmental issues.

Please take action to stop this loss of environmental funds. Learn more about this issue and if you agree, call your legislators and the Governor's office 717-787-2500 to express your opposition. Get involved on social media using the hash tags [#Save-Keystone](#) and [#SaveESF](#) and pass this message along to friends and colleagues. You can find more information from [PA-GrowingGreener.org](#), The [PA Environment Digest](#), and the websites [KeystoneFund.org](#) and [GrowingGreener.info](#) which have a wealth of background information.

by Andy McAllister, Regional Coordinator, WPCAMR

Membership Benefits

We are pleased to announce the following partners who have supported Evergreen Conservancy by giving discounts to card-carrying members of Evergreen Conservancy. Visit them, get your discount, and thank them for supporting Evergreen Conservancy!

Spaghetti Benders	15% discount	spaghettibenders.com
Michael B's Shoe Store	\$10 off any purchase	www.michaelbshoes.com
Plant-it Earth	15% discount	on FaceBook The-Plant-It-Earth-Greenhouse-And-Gardens
Little Mahoning Creek Pottery	10% discount	www.nancysmeltzer.etsy.com
		littlemahoningcreekpottery.blogspot.com
Homemade Restaurant	10% off total bill	www.thehomemaderestaurantpa.com
Artist Hand Gallery	12 oz. drip coffee \$1	theartistshandgallery.com

JOIN OR RENEW your membership TODAY if you have not already done so for 2018-2019.

Support Evergreen When Shopping

You can support Evergreen Conservancy this year by shopping! Shop local first, but if you do on line shopping do it at smile.amazon.com and Amazon will donate to Evergreen Conservancy. Shop for everyone on your gift list this holiday at smile.amazon.com/ch/01-0808065 and Amazon donates to Evergreen Conservancy.



Keeping Body and Soul Together... Naturally

Mon- Tue: 9:00am - 6:00pm Wed: 9:00am - 7:00 pm Thu - Fri: 9:00am - 6:00pm Sat: 9:00am - 5:00pm

Please support Nature's Way market in Greensburg. They support us with a generous donation!



Thanks again for the generous donation from Nature's Way of Greensburg who belongs to 1% of the Planet. Next time you are in Greensburg stop by and say thanks to them!

1% of the Planet is a global network of businesses, nonprofits and individuals working together for a healthy planet. Businesses that join 1% for the Planet commit to giving 1% of total sales each year to your choice of our approved nonprofit partners. You can get involved! Joining is easy – go to www.onepercentfortheplanet.org/tell-us-about-your-organization . 1% of the Planet brings dollars and doers together to accelerate smart environmental giving. The Planet needs you NOW.

Reminder to Renew Memberships!

There is still time for 2019 memberships. Please don't forget to support Evergreen Conservancy with your membership renewal or new membership - due now. You can also support us painlessly by shopping with Amazon Smile or using Goodsearch as your search engine on the internet. As a reward for being a member you will get discounts at some local merchants which are listed on the back of your membership card. Consider giving a gift of a membership as a gift! Thanks to all!

Join Evergreen Conservancy Today!

Support the all-volunteer Evergreen Conservancy and its mission through your membership.

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Membership Levels:

_____ \$15: Student _____ \$25 _____ \$45 _____ \$70 _____ \$100

_____ \$1 Youth (17 and under) _____ \$ Other _____ \$75: Business/Org

Additional Donation: \$ _____

Complete this form and send check to:

Evergreen Conservancy, PO Box 0783, Indiana, PA 15701



I am interested in volunteering:

____ as a board member ____ on a committee (finance, PR fundraising) ____ with water monitoring field work
 ____ on Legal issues ____ with grant writing ____ environmental education ____ social media ____ Homer City gardens plots
 ____ with fundraising activities (making crafts or manning a table at sales) ____ other _____